

How Facebook Turned WhatsApp Into a Money Making Machine

Abstract:

Of all the Facebook properties, WhatsApp's core business model might be the least understood. We know, for example, that Facebook acquired the company back in 2014 for [over \\$10 billion dollars](#), and we know that the app has, since then, become somewhat of a staple messaging system for huge swaths of the world. We also know that WhatsApp collects [some degree of data](#) about these users, but the specifics of that data—and what it's actually used for—aren't typically discussed by the company, or by Facebook's critics. My talk will not only break down those data details, but also explain how Facebook is (very quietly) turning this acquisition into a key part of its company's core ad-based business.

Bio:

Shoshana Wodinsky is a reporter at Gizmodo covering consumer data, digital privacy and tech policy. In particular, she's interested in the way our data gets bought, sold, and shared as part of the internet's underlying economy.